United Nations S/PV.6146

Security Council

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Official communiqué of the 6146th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 19 June 2009, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 19 June 2009, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 6146th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, Director of the Asia and Middle East Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

"Members of the Council, Mr. Weisbrod-Weber and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had an exchange of views."

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United Nations S/PV.6147

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6147th meeting

Monday, 22 June 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Çorman	(Turkey)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Lutterotti
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. De Riviere
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (S/2009/309)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-37565 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (S/2009/309)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Central African Republic, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

Also in accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Jan Grauls, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Belgium.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Grauls to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/309, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Lynn Pascoe and Mr. Jan Grauls. I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: I appreciate the opportunity to present the latest report (S/2009/309) of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (BONUCA) in that country.

There were significant developments in the Central African Republic during the period under review. Those included the efforts to implement the outcomes of the historic inclusive political dialogue held in December 2008. The dialogue itself was widely welcomed, especially by the people of the Central African Republic, as the most far-reaching endeavour towards genuine national reconciliation since the eruption of the current crisis in the mid-1990s.

Members will recall that, in its presidential statement of 7 April 2009, the Security Council welcomed the successful convening of the dialogue and reiterated

> "its full support for this process, as an effective framework to foster national reconciliation and stability in the Central African Republic". (*S/PRST/2009/5, first paragraph*)

The post-dialogue period has, in the main, been characterized by two, sometimes contradictory, trends. On the one hand, significant efforts have been and continue to be made to implement the recommendations of the dialogue with a view to consolidating the momentum for peace in the country. A broad-based Government was formed, a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Steering Committee was established and a Follow-up Committee was set up to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the dialogue, with the participation of the United Nations and other key international partners.

On the other hand, there has also been a resurgence of rebellion in the north of the country — a development that contradicts the spirit of reconciliation that the dialogue sought to engender. For instance, on 21 June, there were reports of rebel attacks in Birao. After several hours of fighting, forces of the Central African Republic and of the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement repelled the attack. The total number of casualties remains unknown. The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) has relocated 18 international personnel of non-governmental organizations to MINURCAT headquarters at Birao. Underlying those two contradictory developments is a third element, namely, the increasing fragility of the peace process in the Central African Republic and of the country itself.

I have just returned from a visit to the Central African Republic. I was able to see for myself the impact of years of instability and insecurity on the country. But I also heard words that reflected the profound faith that the Government and the people of the country have in the United Nations, which they view as a reliable partner for the realization of their aspirations to a better future. The problems are huge, but I am convinced that the United Nations can help to move them towards a solution.

As the Council is meeting here today, the National Assembly of the Central African Republic is holding an extraordinary session to discuss and adopt a new electoral code to guide the preparations for and conduct of legislative and presidential elections in 2010. We are concerned by claims by opposition political parties that some key provisions of the code submitted to the Assembly by the Government are at variance with the version of the document that was adopted by the ad hoc Committee charged with revising the electoral code. The organization of peaceful, transparent and credible elections is contingent on the adoption of an electoral code that is accepted by all stakeholders.

Another key measure linked to the electoral code is the establishment of the independent electoral commission, as called for by this past December's inclusive political dialogue. That commission, to be made up of different shades of political opinion and civil society, would ensure a credible, transparent and inclusive electoral process. We have received a request for electoral assistance from the Government, and once the commission is established we will dispatch a needs-assessment mission promptly to Bangui to assess ways in which the United Nations can contribute to the process.

The Secretary-General has called on the Central African Republic authorities to ensure that elections are held on schedule, as provided for in the Central African Republic Constitution, in order to prevent a constitutional power vacuum that could further complicate an already fragile political environment, including the possibility of renewed violence. We have also urged all political leaders to avoid intimidation, harassment and incitement and to work to eliminate the current climate of mistrust and suspicion in the political landscape of the Central African Republic. It is especially important for the Government to guarantee security and a level playing field for all participants if the electoral process is to proceed peacefully and with credibility.

Another important challenge facing the peace process is that of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of the country's ex-combatants, who have agreed to end rebellion and join the peace process. While the concrete launching of DDR operations has yet to begin, critical preparatory work has advanced, with technical documentation adopted, provisional lists of potential ex-combatants submitted to the United Nations, and initial funding of about $4 million released from the Peacebuilding Fund to kick-start the project. During my meeting with President Bozize, he reaffirmed his determination to take personal control of the DDR process and to make available the financial assistance of 8 billion CFA francs — about $16 million — pledged by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) to finance DDR projects. At this point, I would like to say what a critical role Ambassador Grauls played in his most recent visit to the Central African Republic in ensuring that this money was available for this very valuable process.

Subsequently, we were informed that a total of 5 billion CFA francs — about $10 million — of the CEMAC funds had already been disbursed. The Secretary-General has appealed to the international community to provide additional support for the successful completion of the estimated $30 million DDR programme, on which the imperatives for security and peaceful elections hinge.

DDR is only part of a broader programme of security sector reforms. Its success will strengthen efforts to make progress towards security sector reforms in the Central African Republic. A successful security sector reform (SSR) would in turn help institute, for the first time in nearly three decades, a multi-ethnic, professional and republican military and security establishment for the defence of democratic institutions and not in the service of partisan and mono-ethnic political movements. The Secretary-General has appealed for international support for programmes being put forward by the Central African Republic authorities in support of the national security sector reform strategy, including the organization of the donors' round table on security sector reform scheduled for October this year.

During my visit to the Central African Republic, I had the opportunity to visit the military component of the peacebuilding mission of the Economic Community of Central African States based in Bangui. This force of 520 troops is making a major contribution, in partnership with the United Nations and other partners, towards the stabilization of the Central African Republic. I salute their courage and determination and commend their Governments for the concrete demonstration of political will and solidarity in support of peace in the Central African Republic.

Two days from now, the Bretton Woods institutions will examine the possibility of granting debt relief to the Central African Republic under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. As pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, the country's macroeconomic reforms have been widely acclaimed by international partners and are credited for turning a previously bleak picture into one in which not only is economic growth happening, but in which long-term prospects are rated as encouraging and deserving of enhanced donor support. Should those reforms continue and should the overall climate of political stabilization persist, it is reasonable to be hopeful about the possibilities of reducing the desperately high levels of poverty and misery in the medium term.

The best way forward now is to address the multifaceted problems besetting the Central African Republic through the implementation of the recently adopted strategic framework for peacebuilding. It is vital that the Central African Republic take full ownership of the road map, which identifies three key pillars for sustainable peacebuilding, namely, security through DDR and SSR, good governance, including respect for human rights and the rule of law, and development. The United Nations will work in partnership with the Central African Republic to support its efforts to implement these strategic priorities.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the important contribution being made to that end by the Peacebuilding Commission, especially its country-specific configuration for the Central African Republic, led by Ambassador Jan Grauls of Belgium, who, as an example of his commitment to the goal of promoting the sustainable stabilization of the Central African Republic, last month undertook his fourth mission to the country in a year. He has been a strong voice of the international community for reform and progress in the Central African Republic.

Members will recall that the Council has endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal to transform BONUCA into a United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA). The purpose is to maximize the United Nations contribution to the Central African Republic, minimize the risks of duplication and simplify consultations with our partners, including the Central African Republic authorities.

The report of the Secretary-General before the Council sets out the proposed structure and staffing of BINUCA, as requested by the Council in April. As the transition process proceeds, the Secretary-General proposes that BINUCA become fully operational by 1 January 2010. We will use the intervening period to finalize recruitment of personnel and to address related logistical and other preparatory tasks so that the new Office can take off smoothly, as scheduled, on 1 January 2010.

I am delighted to have with us here today the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Central African Republic and head of BONUCA, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, who departs in a few days for Bangui to take up her important assignment. The Central African Republic authorities, during my recent visit, welcomed her appointment, thanked the Secretary-General for his continued support and reiterated their cooperation with BONUCA. I also want to express my appreciation to Mr. Sammy Kum Buo, the Director of the Africa II

Division of the Department of Political Affairs, who has aptly filled in for the past three months as Officer-in-Charge in Bangui. He has done an excellent job in bridging the gap.

In conclusion, allow me to add my voice to that of the Secretary-General and other world leaders who have paid tribute to the late Gabonese President for his mediation in various conflicts across Africa. President Bongo was a strong advocate of peace whose passing has been felt not least in the Central African Republic, a country that was close to his heart. Six months ago, he personally travelled to Bangui twice within two weeks to attend the opening and closing ceremonies of the inclusive political dialogue. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement for the Central African Republic, which forms the foundation of the current peace process, was signed exactly one year ago yesterday, on 21 June 2008 in Libreville, Gabon, under his chairmanship.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing. I would also like to thank Mr. Pascoe for bringing to the Council's attention the presence of Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic. On behalf of the Council, I wish to congratulate her on her appointment and to convey our best wishes to her on her assignment. The Council looks forward to working with her.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jan Grauls.

Mr. Grauls (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, Sir, to thank you for giving me the opportunity once again to address the Security Council in my capacity as Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configuration on the Central African Republic. I should also like to warmly welcome the appointment of Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and to assure her of the Commission's support.

Since I last addressed the Council in March, the Peacebuilding Commission adopted its strategic framework for peacebuilding on 6 May. The framework is a kind of road map for achieving the goals that the Commission has set itself. From 21 to 23 May, I led a mission to Bangui to officially present the framework to all actors of Central African society.

As Mr. Pascoe noted, the Commission has decided to focus on three urgent priorities: security sector reform (SSR) and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme for ex-combatants; good governance and the rule of law; and the identification of development poles, to be considered as embryonic structures created to relaunch socio-economic development throughout the Central African Republic. Those three priorities correspond perfectly to the conclusions reached by the inclusive political dialogue that brought the Government, the unarmed opposition, rebel groups and civil society together in December.

The Commission is currently focusing its attention on two files that are critical to stability and peace in the Central African Republic. I refer to the drafting and implementation of a DDR programme thoroughly integrated into the SSR programme, and the preparation for elections in 2010. Without successful DDR, the electoral process may be compromised, and without a successful electoral process the entire country runs the risk of being destabilized.

The drafting of the DDR programme is progressing. Considerable technical work has been completed, and political conditions are being established so that the programme can be launched in optimal circumstances. In that regard, I note the return of recalcitrant rebel groups to the peace process, which is an encouraging sign. The financing of the early DDR phases seems to be assured thanks, among other things, to contributions from the Peacebuilding Fund and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and to the agreement of President Bozizé to allocate to DDR all the funds pledged by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, pursuant to the communiqué issued by the heads of State in Libreville on 30 January. We encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to pay those funds into the UNDP Trust Fund in order to ensure their transparency and effective management.

If the DDR process is to begin expeditiously, the Steering Committee must rapidly proceed to validate the submitted lists of recognized combatants belonging to political-military groups. The Commission also encourages the strengthening of the subregional Mission de consolidation de la paix en République Centrafricaine, which will be called on to supervise the DDR programme.

I wish to say a word on the electoral process. If it is to unfold in acceptable conditions, the process must enjoy the assistance of the international community. In that regard, the authorities of the Central African Republic must urgently establish the Mixed and Independent Electoral Commission, the only national body authorized under the Constitution to undertake preparations for elections and to adopt changes to the electoral code. The activation of the Commission is necessary to ensure the firm commitment of the United Nations and other actors of the international community.

In agreement with the Government of the Central African Republic, it has been decided that an initial assessment of the implementation of the strategic framework will be carried out in six months. The biannual assessments should allow us to maintain the momentum of the peacebuilding process in the Central African Republic.

In order to strengthen peace and stability in their country, the people of the Central African Republic need the support of the international community. The encouraging signs to which I have referred are an appeal to which we must respond positively. That is why, since the strategic framework was adopted, I have visited various Governments and organizations in order to make international partners aware of the needs of the Central African Republic and to invite them to join in the Commission's efforts. I have noted an upsurge in interest in the Central African Republic, a country that, perhaps with reason, was long considered an orphan of international assistance.

It is important to involve non-governmental organizations in those awareness-raising efforts. At the most recent meeting of our configuration, two important international non-governmental organizations confirmed that they would increase their presence on the ground in the country. Some countries have also conveyed to me their willingness to consider specific proposals for a new or increased involvement in the Central African Republic, pursuant to the priorities of the strategic framework. I feel that, while it may yet appear to be low-key, this renewed interest of the international community in the Republic must still be underscored.

The Peacebuilding Commission advocated the transformation of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic into the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office, and in that regard welcomed the presidential statement of 7 April (S/PRST/2009/5), whereby the decision was taken in principle to establish the new Office as soon as possible. The Commission is pleased to note that the new structure for the Integrated Office, as proposed in the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/309), will allow us better to assist its work. The Commission especially welcomes the establishment of a Human Rights and Justice Section, to include prison experts, among others, and of a Security Institutions Section. The creation of the posts of Gender Adviser and Child Protection Adviser are also very welcome proposals. I express the hope that the new integrated structure will be established as soon as possible in order to facilitate the implementation of the Peacebuilding Commission's strategic framework. It would indeed be regrettable to waste time.

With the death of the President of Gabon, the late El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, the Central African Republic has lost a founding father of its peace process. I salute the vision and untiring support that the late President gave to the Central African Republic in recent years in order to help it turn towards a more hopeful future. The peacebuilding process will continue to require the full attention of the Government of the Central African Republic and its international partners in the coming months and years.

The President: I thank Mr. Grauls for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes your presidency of the Security Council for June, Sir, and congratulates you thereon. Turkey's commitment to peace in the world and its unequivocal support for developing countries reflect its genuine desire to promote truly global multilateralism. My country, the Central African Republic, thanks the Turkish Government for the multifaceted assistance it has provided to the Central African Republic and will continue to provide in the future.

The Central African Republic also thanks the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2009/309) on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (BONUCA) in that country. We commend Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe for presenting

the report and his informative briefing. We cannot fail to note the full role that Mr. Sammy Kum Buo, Director of the Africa II Division in the Department of Political Affairs and Officer-in-Charge of BONUCA, has played in recent months. His interim term was noteworthy because he was able to address all the thorny issues with the managing authorities and key actors of the Central African Republic.

We also wish to congratulate Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde on her appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of BONUCA beginning 15 June 2009. We appreciate her appointment, which was completed after a rigorous selection process. Her experience is reassuring because she is already familiar with the problems of the Central African Republic, having worked on the subject within the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. My country offers her its full support during her term in office. Our hopes have been fulfilled and we thank the Secretary-General most sincerely.

We must also pay well-deserved tribute to her predecessor, Mr. François Lonseny Fall, for his dedication and determination to move the Central African Republic issue forward.

2009 is a key year for the Central African Republic, which must now take courageous measures to determine its future. The implementation of the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue, and in particular the establishment of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, the organization of general elections in 2010 and the mobilization of resources, are the challenges to be taken up in the coming months.

My delegation notes the progress achieved after the holding of the political dialogue, including the establishment of the Follow-up Committee for the implementation of the dialogue recommendations, the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Steering Committee and the High Court of Justice. Any apparent delay in the implementation of those programmes is due to a lack of financing, which has yet to be mobilized.

At the political level, there is a genuine resolve to move towards reconciliation, even if a few political and military actors seem to be choosing the path of force. My Government recognizes that the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement launched an irreversible peace process. The Government is striving to make its influence felt in everyday affairs, as it has informed the Council on several occasions.

President Bozizé met with the Libyan leader and current Chairperson of the African Union and asked him to support the cause of comprehensive and lasting peace in the Central African Republic. The return to the country of one of the political and military chiefs, Abakar Sabone, is a good sign that the country is progressing little by little along the path towards true reconciliation. The DDR programme is advancing slowly but surely. Working documents have been created and lists of political and military groups drafted, and a team has been established to manage and mobilize contributions from the Peacebuilding Fund. However, that programme must be brought into line with security sector reform and the development hubs. If they are to be reintegrated into civilian life, ex-combatants must have training to allow them to make a living. It is therefore important for the development hubs to become a reality in due time.

Security and defence forces must also be deployed in tandem with those programmes. At the same time, that deployment is of major concern of the Government of the Central African Republic, which is doing its best to find financing because it wants DDR to be implemented as quickly as possible. Funds already collected by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community will be allocated exclusively to the peace process. We wish here to pay a well-deserved tribute here in memory of His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon, for his personal involvement in helping to resolve the crisis in the Central African Republic and for being a mobilizer of funds to contribute to peacebuilding and disarmament.

The issue of elections in 2010 is not problematic, because the Government intends to respect the electoral timetable. Thus, the draft electoral code to launch that process remains under consideration by the National Assembly. The Government is counting on the support of the United Nations to successfully complete the process.

With respect to humanitarian issues, it is regrettable to note that, in the northern part of the country, clashes between certain rebel groups — including the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain and the Convergence des patriotes centrafricains pour la justice et la paix — with the

Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA), have displaced Central Africans inside and outside the country. We also note a new manifestation of violence in the northern part of the country — inter-community violence. But the Central African Republic is also a welcoming country, and has received Sudanese refugees who have fled the violence in Darfur since 2007. Thanks to the joint action of the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and other humanitarian agencies, as well as the National Commission for Refugees and the local population, refugees and displaced persons are receiving assistance.

Where there is violence, human rights violations are inevitable and we bitterly regret that. The Central African Republic is emerging painfully from a long period of crisis and the deployment of its defence and security forces is occurring gradually in areas where violence persists because of the actions of rebel groups and widespread banditry. Nevertheless, the authorities of the Central African Republic have taken measures to prevent all acts of violence in conformity with the law. Thus, new penal and military codes are being finalized. A national human rights commission will be established to address all human rights issues in the Central African Republic, including the rights of women and children in armed conflict, as well as the rights of refugees.

In the context of restructuring the army and raising the moral standards of the military, on 11 June the National Assembly enacted a military training law for FACA and the police for the period 2009-2013. The law is aimed at consolidating and conditioning the necessary personnel for FACA and the national police in the areas of recruitment, training, retirement and career management, and at identifying the budgetary contributions of the State and the international community that are necessary in order to achieve the objectives set for 2013.

Since our country has been on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, the authorities of the Central African Republic have cooperated fully with the country-specific configuration on the Central African Republic, chaired by Ambassador Jan Grauls, Permanent Representative of Belgium. In his determination and ardent desire for us to succeed, he has taken a series of measures that have moved the situation in the Central African Republic decidedly forward. His many missions to Bangui and throughout the world to plead the case of the Central African Republic plainly demonstrate that he is a staunch defender of those in need. The Central African Republic is very grateful for his commitment.

The strategic framework adopted on 6 May 2009 resulted from intensive consultations among all stakeholders in the Central African Republic and the international community. That document, which will be revised every six months, was presented officially to the Central African Republic parties by Ambassador Grauls when he visited from 21 to 23 May 2009. That visit was truly successful in that it brought together many members of the Government, civil society and other stakeholders, including the media, which duly disseminated the message of the Chairman of the configuration on the Central African Republic. National ownership remains the leitmotif of the strategic framework's success. However, the international community should also demonstrate its flexibility by lending its unconditional support to achieving the set objectives.

The Government supports that programme and is ready to invest in its success. May we all support the configuration's Chair in his determination to meet the schedule for the best results. The fight against the poverty afflicting most of the Central African Republic's population requires respect for the established programmes. The political will of the authorities has already been confirmed by its simple resolve to hold elections in 2010 and to complete the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme as soon as possible.

We welcome the decision to transform the United Nations the Peacebuilding Support Office into the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA). That new structure will allow the activities of the United Nations system to be coordinated on the ground as it supports the political, socio-economic and sustainable development activities in the Central African Republic. The future BINUCA will have the advantage of being deeply involved in implementing the strategic framework.

While we generally accept the contents of the report of the Secretary-General, we nevertheless have an objection to raise with regard to paragraph 74. The information contained in that paragraph, in our opinion, is not in line with the history of the Central African Republic. Contrary to what is written, the

national day is celebrated solemnly and joyously by the people each 1 December, except for one period only when there were repeated mutinies. That celebration takes place throughout the territory, without exception. The Republic's fiftieth anniversary, like those of previous years, was greatly appreciated, and we expect the same for the fifty-first anniversary in December 2009.

Lastly, we would like to reiterate our full support for the activities of the United Nations in the Central African Republic, which, we hope, will continue in the future. The recent visits of Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe, head of the Department of Political Affairs, were well received by the authorities in the Central African Republic, which had not been visited by a United Nations high official since the country emerged from the crisis. Mr. Pascoe went to the Central African Republic without preconceptions and to listen to the authorities. In that visit, we felt the United Nations presence even closer to the Central African Republic.

We also thank all other bilateral and multilateral partners that are contributing effectively to the cause of stabilization and sustainable peace in the Central African Republic. They can rest assured of the full and good cooperation of our Government.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6148

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6148th meeting

Tuesday, 23 June 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President	Mr. Ilkin	(Turkey)
Members	Austria	Mr. Ebner
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/2009/295)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-37680 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/2009/295)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/320, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2009/295, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Russian Federation, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1875 (2009).

In connection with the resolution just adopted on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, I have been authorized to make the following complementary statement on behalf of the Security Council:

> "As is known, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/2009/295) states in paragraph 11 that 'the situation in the Middle East is tense and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached'. That statement of the Secretary-General reflects the view of the Security Council."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2009/18.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6149

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6149th meeting

Tuesday, 23 June 2009, 10.15 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. İlkin	(Turkey)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Ebner
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (S/2009/302)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-37686 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (S/2009/302)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Mutaboba to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Brazil.

It is so decided.

I invite Mrs. Viotti to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/302, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Mutaboba and Mrs. Viotti.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mutaboba.

Mr. Mutaboba: It is a pleasure to be with the Council today and to present the thirty-fifth report (S/2009302) of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in that country (UNOGBIS).

In particular, I would like to brief the Council on the continuing political and military tensions following the assassinations of President Vieira and the Chief of the General Staff, General Tagme Na Waie, preparations for the presidential elections and the recommendations for the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

The apparent calm following the assassinations of President Vieira and General Tagme in March 2009 was disrupted when the Minister of Territorial Administration and a candidate in the presidential elections, Mr. Baciro Dabó, was killed by armed men at his home in the early hours of 5 June. Another leading Member of Parliament and a former Minister of Defence, Mr. Helder Proença, was killed together with his driver and bodyguard in a car ambush at approximately the same time. The State intelligence services reported that both men were resisting arrest over involvement in an alleged coup attempt. There were also other arrests, including that of a former Prime Minister, Mr. Faustino Imbali, in connection with this alleged coup.

With regard to the presidential elections, these violent events took place on the eve of the official launch of those elections and threatened to disrupt the election schedule. One candidate, Mr. Pedro Infanda, who is also the lawyer of former Navy Chief of Staff Bubo Na Tchuto, withdrew from the presidential race. That brings the number of candidates down from 13 to 11.

However, let me stress that the preparations for the organization of the elections as well as for the international observation remain, as we speak, on track. During Under-Secretary-General Pascoe's visit to Guinea-Bissau on 13 June, the interim President Raimundo Pereira confirmed that presidential elections would be held as scheduled on 28 June.

The United Nations Development Programme is providing technical support and UNOGBIS will coordinate the activities of international electoral observers from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the

International Organization of la Francophonie and the West African Economic and Monetary Union. The European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and some individual countries will also be deploying electoral observers.

With regard to security developments, the general situation is fragile and a sense of insecurity palpable among both the elite and the general population, as proved by the rumours of the death of the interim Chief of General Staff, which caused panic among the population in Bissau. Commander Induta was forced to give a radio interview to prove that the rumour was unfounded, to assuage the fears not only of the general population, but also those of his supporters in the armed forces.

There is also a high degree of distrust and scepticism, particularly over reports that the two politicians were killed because they had resisted arrest. There have been four major incidents of violence and/or alleged coups since August 2008. This is not the ideal setting for peaceful elections, of course.

With respect to the Commission of Inquiry, the investigations into the assassinations of President Vieira and General Tagme Na Waie are ongoing. The parallel military investigation into the bomb blast that killed General Tagme was completed and the report handed over to the Government. The Commission of Inquiry, headed by the Prosecutor General, questioned the validity of the military investigation and the lack of cooperation by the military.

The Government sent a letter dated 22 May to the Secretary-General requesting the setting up of an international commission of inquiry into the double assassinations of President Vieira and General Tagme. It also requested that the African Union, ECOWAS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States be invited to assist the international commission.

Currently, the United Nations is working with ECOWAS and the African Union to ensure that appropriate international expertise and logistical support are provided to the national Commission. International support will need to be provided, recognizing that the responsibility to address impunity and bring the perpetrators to justice must rest with the national authorities and be seen by the population as a national undertaking. This is the only way that we can contribute to making Guinea-Bissau's justice system credible in the eyes of its citizens and the international community. The presence of international experts naturally has security implications that need to be considered.

With regard to human rights developments, six people, including three civilians, are in detention at various armed forces sites in Bissau in connection with the alleged coup in June. They include the Director General of intelligence services, who was detained simply because he refused to sign the intelligence services' communiqué of 5 June on the existence of a coup attempt. The military has not yet handed over evidence or the detainees to the judicial authorities, despite various Government requests that it do so. The detainees are being held in contravention of the law, and the three civilians have had access to the Red Cross but have yet to be granted free access to relatives, lawyers or doctors.

As to the economic and social situation in the country, the Government, which won an overwhelming victory in the legislative elections seven months ago, has been weakened by the paralysis over the March and June events and mounting governance and security challenges. As a result, the Government's focus has moved away from delivering on its electoral promises of paying civil service salaries and improving social services and infrastructure. Disgruntlement over continuing arrears, teachers' strikes and the political and military instability have considerably eroded the political capital that the Government enjoyed in November 2008. This will require the elected President, irrespective of what party he or she — there is one female candidate — may be a member of, and the party that won the 2008 legislative elections, to work together in the interests of creating a political environment conducive to stable governance for the rest of the legislature. This enterprise will require a selfless spirit among the political class, in particular, and a healthy spirit of collaboration between the institutions of the State. Continued instability is the desire of spoilers who benefit from a weak State, organized crime and drug trafficking.

The Secretary-General's report includes proposals for the creation of a United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. This proposal comes in recognition of the need to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau at this critical time of rampant poverty, political tension and instability. The

proposed Integrated Peacebuilding Office will support the efforts of the Guinea-Bissau authorities and focus on the reform of the defence and security sectors, the promotion of the rule of law and human rights, enhancing political dialogue and national reconciliation, and strengthening national institutions.

The Integrated Office will also support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and contribute to the coordination and coherence of international efforts in Guinea-Bissau. The Office will work in close partnership with the African Union, ECOWAS, the African Development Bank, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In particular, there is a call for the Integrated Office to coordinate the many security sector reform initiatives undertaken by the international community in Guinea-Bissau. Only through coordinated, coherent and concerted efforts will we be able to make a real difference in the reform of the security sector, which is a sine qua non for peace consolidation in the country.

Allow me to appeal for the Council's support in ensuring that the Office is well resourced and fully staffed so that it can effectively fulfil its mandate and make a real difference in the lives of the people of Guinea-Bissau.

In conclusion, the challenges facing Guinea-Bissau are enormous. Although the Government and the people of Guinea-Bissau have the primary responsibility to address these challenges, we in the international community must stay engaged and provide the much-needed support for critical reforms in the justice, defence and security sectors, as well as for public administration reform, for the work of the Commission of Inquiry, and most urgently for the peaceful conduct of the presidential elections.

The President: I thank Mr. Mutaboba for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti.

Mrs. Viotti: I thank the Security Council and you, Sir, for the kind invitation to participate in this debate in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I would like to express appreciation to the Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, for his comprehensive briefing.

Since 8 April, when I last appeared before the Council, a number of developments have affected peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau, in particular the assassinations of Mr. Baciro Dabó, a candidate in the upcoming presidential election, and Mr. Helder Proença, a Member of Parliament and former Minister of Defence. The Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission joined this Council and other international organizations in strongly condemning such actions.

As is widely known, the assassinations took place only three months after the brutal killings of President João Bernardo Vieira and General Tagme Na Waie and were preceded by episodes of political unrest and physical attacks on public figures. The sequence of events suggests the continuation of a pattern of using violence for political aims and for settling old scores. Aside from being utterly deplorable, such a pattern is counterproductive, as the sad reality of the past decades has shown. Only by upholding the rule of law and the constitutional order will Bissau Guineans be able to break the cycle of violence and advance towards the consolidation of peace and development. A full and credible investigation of the assassinations of March and June is therefore necessary and must be supported.

In spite of those tragic and worrisome events, it is reassuring that the presidential elections will take place on 28 June, as scheduled. Every effort must be made to ensure that they are conducted in an atmosphere of tranquillity, that the electoral process is free, fair and transparent, and that the results are respected.

Holding elections in such a manner is crucial not only to help to normalize political life by ensuring the legitimacy of the country's political leadership, but also to enable a process of national reconciliation to be launched. The upcoming vote, if properly conducted, may pave the way for a true dialogue among the main political forces and lead to an environment conducive to a peaceful and democratic resolution of disputes. Such an endeavour, which is crucial for peacebuilding, must be encouraged and supported by the international community.

The mitigation of the serious socio-economic problems of the country and the adoption of a long-term strategy for its development are also critical to peacebuilding. It is important that the international community take an integrated approach to peacebuilding

in Guinea-Bissau, as the political and economic sides of the equation are mutually supportive.

The political instability in Guinea-Bissau since March has shown the need for the country-specific configuration to redouble its efforts. We have remained engaged throughout that difficult period. On 17 April I visited Guinea-Bissau for consultations with Government authorities, including with interim President Raimundo Pereira, Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior and Minister for Defence Artur Silva. Our conversations focused on Peacebuilding Commission support for the presidential elections and on the heightened need to vigorously pursue the reform of the security sector.

On 20 April, I participated in the round table on security sector reform held in Praia, Cape Verde. The meeting provided an opportunity for a presentation by the Government of Guinea-Bissau of its plans and proposals on security sector reform and for a thorough discussion with international partners. Among other considerations, the outcome of the meeting pointed to the need to set up a pension fund for members of the military who will go into retirement and to ensure realistic and yet attractive conditions for the reintegration of former combatants into civilian life. A short-term plan of action is expected to be developed in order to guide future actions.

The country-specific meeting will continue its engagement with Guinea-Bissau by encouraging and supporting a national dialogue on peacebuilding and reconciliation after the elections. Soon afterwards, it will be important for the meeting to re-engage with national stakeholders in tackling the priorities outlined in the strategic framework for peacebuilding, especially security sector reform, youth employment and the fight against drug trafficking. I also intend to launch a discussion within the country-specific meeting about a possible recommendation on a second tranche of Peacebuilding Fund resources and to continue consultations regarding a possible donors' conference later this year. The continued dialogue with international financial institutions also remains extremely important. We welcome the recent approval of the interim strategy note of the World Bank, as well as the approval of a new credit line to the country.

The success of peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau requires a stronger and more coherent United Nations presence on the ground. That is why the recommendations contained in the report (S/2009/302) of the Secretary-General concerning the transformation of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau into an integrated office deserve our full support. They are timely and well founded. Giving the United Nations Office in Guinea-Bissau a robust mandate, along with the corresponding resources, is the most politically wise and financially cost-effective decision that the Security Council and the General Assembly can make today in support of the country.

The President: I thank Mrs. Viotti for her briefing. There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6150

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6150th meeting

Tuesday, 23 June 2009, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. İlkin	(Turkey)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Ebner
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Huang Hongjiang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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09-37692 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Robert Serry. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Serry: Since the Council met on 11 May, international diplomatic efforts to reinvigorate the search for peace in the Middle East have continued.

The Quartet principals will meet on 26 June in Trieste, where the Quartet will also meet with members of the Arab League follow-up committee. In advance of the Quartet, Arab foreign ministers will meet in Cairo and Prime Minister Netanyahu will meet United States envoy Mitchell in Paris. These meetings are part of a concerted push to secure the required commitments and actions from the parties to create conditions for relaunching efforts for a two-State solution.

United States President Obama's 4 June speech in Cairo reiterated his commitment to the creation of a Palestinian State and the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. On 14 June 2009, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that the Israeli Government would accept a Palestinian State, but under stringent conditions related to territory, security, refugees, Jerusalem and the character of the State of Israel. The speech represented a step forward given the previous positions of the current Government. I reiterate what the Secretary-General told the Council last month:

> "Action on the ground, together with a genuine readiness to negotiate on all core issues, including Jerusalem, borders and refugees, based on Israel's existing commitments, will be the true tests of Israel's commitment to the two-State solution." (*S/PV.6123, p. 3*)

In this regard, the Israeli Government failed to commit to or announce measures to begin to implement a freeze on all settlement activity, including natural growth. Despite efforts to remove three minor outposts during the reporting period, illegal settlement construction continued across the West Bank in contravention of the Road Map. Reports that processes to approve new construction in settlements continue as before are extremely concerning.

During the reporting period, settlers injured seven Palestinians in violent attacks, burned several fields and uprooted hundreds of olive trees. Settlers tried to take over seven dunums of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem, leading to violent clashes with local Palestinian residents. There continues to be inadequate enforcement of the rule of law against violent settlers. However, I welcome the decision of the Israeli Government to offer financial compensation to 50 Palestinian plaintiffs affected by settler violence in Hebron in November 2008.

Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem remain closed by Israeli order and demolition orders continue to be issued against Palestinian homeowners in East Jerusalem and in the remainder of the West Bank, with approximately 4,500 orders outstanding. We reiterate our call for an end to unilateral Israeli measures in Jerusalem and an end to house demolitions.

I welcome the concrete steps taken by the Israeli Government to ease movement restrictions on key access routes into the cities of Nablus, Jericho, Qalqiliya and Ramallah. However, over 600 obstacles remain in place, as does the stringent permit system for Palestinian movement. The construction of the barrier within the occupied Palestinian territory continues, despite the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. Fundamental alterations in Israel's policies will be required to facilitate a transformative change in the West Bank, which is the Israeli Government's stated and welcome intention.

Citing security concerns, Israeli forces continued search-and-arrest operations throughout the West Bank. One Palestinian was killed and another 96, including 33 children, were injured. Five Israelis were injured by Palestinians. Today, Israel released the Speaker of the

Palestinian Legislative Council, Hamas member Aziz Dweik, after 34 months in prison.

Turning to the Palestinian side, President Abbas responded to the speech of Prime Minister Netanyahu by insisting that Israel freeze settlement activity before negotiations can resume. In a speech on 22 June, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad outlined the intention, despite the continuing conditions of occupation, to build the institutions of a Palestinian State in two years. In this regard, I am glad to report that the United Nations has finalized a medium-term response plan to guide all United Nations efforts to support a Palestinian-led process of State-building.

An immediate challenge facing the Palestinian Authority is financial. When the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met in Oslo on 8 June, Prime Minister Fayyad reported that the Palestinian Authority faces a critical budget crisis. It is essential that Member States act swiftly to fulfil pledges and commit to additional budget support for the Palestinian Authority. At the same time, the only sustainable way to revive the Palestinian economy and for the Palestinian Authority to receive sufficient finances from tax revenues is for Israel to ease closure measures and create an enabling environment for economic growth.

The Palestinian Authority continues efforts to reform its security services and criminal justice system, with considerable international assistance. It also continues to take action against militants in accordance with its Road Map commitments. These efforts resulted in violent confrontations with Hamas in the West Bank during the reporting period, in the most intense internal Palestinian clashes since June 2007. Four members of the security forces were killed in gun battles with Hamas militants in Qalqiliya on 31 May and 3 June, in a security operation which also claimed the lives of four members of Hamas and one civilian.

Palestinian security forces also seized arms, explosives and funds from militant groups, and reportedly foiled plans to attack security infrastructure in Nablus. A Hamas-affiliated detainee died on 15 June while in the custody of Palestinian intelligence in Hebron, in circumstances which are disputed.

This leads me to a further challenge facing Palestinian State-building: reuniting Gaza and the West Bank within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority. The urgency and scale of this challenge is clear from developments on the ground. In response to developments in the West Bank, Hamas arrested dozens of Fatah members in Gaza, ransacking homes, confiscating belongings and placing movement restrictions on Fatah political figures. Demonstrations and media campaigns in Gaza denounced the Palestinian Authority security campaigns and security coordination with Israel. The Hamas military wing warned of an eruption of violence in the West Bank.

Likewise, Hamas continues to assert its control over institutions and organizations in Gaza. On 14 June, a demonstration by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Gaza calling for Palestinian unity was violently disrupted by Hamas security forces. On 17 June, Hamas took over an independent medical non-governmental organization, the Patient's Friends Society, which runs a hospital and a number of clinics in the Strip.

Building Palestinian statehood on the basis of divided societies, separate institutions and competing legitimacies is unsustainable. Hamas must re-evaluate its stance towards a two-State solution and the resort to violence against civilians, and commit to genuine political pluralism. Fatah needs to face the challenge of internal reform. I welcome President Abbas' extensive personal engagement as efforts continue to finalize arrangements for the holding of the sixth Fatah congress. Above all, the factions need to conclude an agreement to reunite within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority, as called for in resolution 1860 (2009) and by the Quartet.

Fatah and Hamas delegations met in Cairo on 8 June and are scheduled to meet again on 28 June, and efforts continue towards reaching an agreement by 7 July in Cairo. Egypt has also facilitated meetings of reconciliation committees in both Gaza and the West Bank in an effort to calm tensions and address issues such as politically motivated detentions and denials of movement. The Secretary-General strongly supports Egypt's efforts, and it is crucial that they be supported by the international community and by all regional parties.

The unresolved crisis in Gaza has negative repercussions on all efforts to advance the peace process and wreaks unacceptable havoc on the fabric of civilian life in Gaza. Resolution 1860 (2009) specified the key challenges that must be met if a different and more positive strategy on Gaza is to emerge. I believe

that there is now an emerging opportunity to begin shifting the dynamics.

There has been a notable and welcome drop in violence during the reporting period. Since 11 May, there have been two rockets and seven mortars launched into Israel from the Gaza Strip, resulting in one injury. Six Palestinians were killed and 10 were injured in clashes with the Israel Defense Forces and as a result of Israeli air strikes. Among those killed were four radical militants who tried to attack an Israeli post on 8 June. There have been efforts on the part of the de facto authorities in Gaza to enforce a cessation of rocket fire.

Likewise, efforts continue in order to prevent the resupply of illicit weapons to militants in Gaza, including Egyptian efforts to close down tunnels and confiscate explosives. I commend the serious Egyptian efforts under way, on which I was briefed during a recent visit to Cairo. The Israeli Mission has informed the Secretariat of Israel's assessment that at least 330 mortars, 37 rockets, 40 anti-tank weapons, 46 anti-aircraft missiles and 17 tons of explosives have entered the Gaza Strip since Operation Cast Lead — information that the Secretariat cannot independently verify.

Conditions for the civilian population remain of grave concern. Food and medicines are entering Gaza, and the first shipment of livestock in nine months entered Gaza on 19 June in the form of 350 cattle. But the overall quantity and range of goods remain grossly insufficient to support normal economic and social activity. About 70 trucks per day have entered Gaza in the past month, which is 15 per cent less than the daily average last month and compares with 392 trucks per day in May 2007, when there was a functioning import-export system. Right before Operation Cast Lead, the daily average of trucks was 18. The quantities of cooking gas and industrial fuel allowed into Gaza met only 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the respective monthly needs.

As the Secretary-General said on 11 May (see S/PV.6123), it is completely unacceptable that no reconstruction materials were allowed into Gaza when an entire civilian population was trapped in a war zone and given the scale of damage caused by Operation Cast Lead. The Secretary-General has presented to Defence Minister Barak a United Nations proposal to kick-start early recovery in Gaza by opening the crossings for materials to complete United Nations construction work on housing, health and educational facilities, suspended since June 2007. The United Nations has existing mechanisms in place to ensure the integrity of the programming. That proposal was developed in close consultation with the Palestinian Authority and the Gaza business community, and Prime Minister Fayyad confirmed his full support to the Secretary-General today. Intensive consultations with the Israeli Government have taken place, and we await Israel's reaction.

The Israeli Government has appointed a new negotiator on the question of Corporal Gilad Shalit, whose third anniversary in captivity was yesterday and to whom the International Committee of the Red Cross has not been granted access. Hamas continues to state its readiness to resume negotiations on that file in exchange for the release of a number of the more than 11,000 prisoners held in Israeli jails. Egyptian efforts are continuing to resolve that crucial issue.

On 1 June, I met Justice Richard Goldstone when he arrived in Gaza, through Rafah, to conduct a first phase of fact-finding, pursuant to the mandate given to him by the Human Rights Council. The mission is expected to return to the Strip at the end of this month. Regrettably, the Government of Israel has not extended cooperation to the mission.

We continue to believe strongly in the potential for activating the regional tracks of the peace process alongside a rejuvenated Palestinian track. United States envoy Mitchell visited Lebanon and Syria on 12 and 13 June for discussions on the revitalization of regional peace efforts. The situation in the occupied Syrian Golan was quiet during the reporting period, although Israeli settlement activity continues.

We continue to support the Arab Peace Initiative as a key framework for comprehensive peace, and welcome and encourage the active engagement of Arab countries in the efforts under way to create the conditions for resumed negotiations. We also continue to support the convening of an international conference in Moscow.

Turning now to Lebanon, and mindful that the Secretary-General will submit his tenth report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) at the end of this month, I should like to focus on the most salient issues since the last briefing on 20 April (see S/PV.6107).

The 7 June parliamentary elections were held in an atmosphere of calm and without any major security concerns. International observation missions assessed that the elections were largely free and fair. The Secretary-General congratulated the people of Lebanon and all Lebanese parties and institutions concerned on the peaceful conduct of the elections. According to the official results released by the Ministry of the Interior, candidates from the 14 March coalition won 71 out of the 128 seats in Parliament, while candidates from the 8 March coalition won 57 seats.

Against that background, a climate of dialogue and cooperation has prevailed in Lebanon since election day. Prime Minister Siniora's Cabinet has been acting in a caretaker capacity since the formal end of the legislative period on 20 June. The election of a new speaker of Parliament will take place on 25 June. After that step has been completed, President Sleiman will appoint the Prime Minister-designate, who will then hold formal consultations on the formation of a new Government. The Secretary-General has expressed his hope that the process of forming a new Government will proceed as expeditiously as possible and take place in a calm and secure environment.

Lebanon's Ambassador to Syria arrived in Damascus to take up his post on 20 April and his Syrian counterpart presented his credentials to President Sleiman on 29 May. Both countries now operate functioning embassies in each other's capitals.

In the period since the last briefing, there have been a large number of arrests, including of former and current military officials, over allegations of spying for Israel. On 16 June, a low-ranking Fatah member was assassinated in Saida's Ain el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp. The assailants remain unknown. In spite of that attack, it must be noted that the situation inside the refugee camps remained calm during the elections.

As concerns the reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp, much work remains to be done. Complications due to the discovery of archaeological artefacts at the old camp site during the removal of rubble have recently caused new delays in the reconstruction schedule.

On 29 April, the four generals held since 2005 in connection with the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri were released upon the recommendation of the pre-trial judge of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

The overall situation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) area of operations remained generally quiet over the reporting period. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued to carry out intensive joint operational activities during that period. Israeli air violations continued on an almost daily basis during the reporting period.

Let me now conclude. As we prepare for Friday's Quartet meeting, we will be looking for a strong affirmation of the international framework for peace, as embodied in the resolutions of this Council, existing agreements and the Arab Peace Initiative. I urge Israelis and Palestinians alike to carefully assess the opportunity before them to serve the legitimate interests of their peoples. Israelis have an opportunity to achieve lasting peace and recognition within secure and recognized borders. Palestinians have an opportunity to see the occupation end and a Palestinian State emerge. We need both Israeli and Palestinian Governments clearly committed to a two-State solution, achieved peacefully through negotiations on all core issues; to implementing their Road Map commitments; and to changing the dynamics in Gaza. International determination is stronger than ever before to ensure that commitments made are commitments monitored and commitments kept.

The President: I thank Mr. Serry for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.